

State of Wisconsin Repetitive Loss Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To help reduce repetitive flood losses, FEMA Region V updated and corrected the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) repetitive loss database for Wisconsin in July 2000. Wisconsin Emergency Management collated the database with its data on mitigation to produce the most accurate picture possible of the current status of repetitive loss properties in Wisconsin.

The State of Wisconsin Repetitive Loss Report was developed to serve as a written summary of the updated Wisconsin database findings and to serve as an attachment to the Wisconsin State Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Repetitive Loss Report describes the methodology and data collection process for repetitive loss properties. The methodology involved contacting all communities with a repetitive loss property and obtaining the best available information on the current building status of each property. The database findings include a brief discussion of the 362 repetitive loss properties, the repetitive loss communities and the success of the acquisitions through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program and other state and local hazard mitigation efforts.

The updated database shows that 46 of the repetitive loss properties (12.70%) have been removed or protected from the threat of flooding by acquisition, elevation, floodproofing, levees or other structural measures. Of these 46 properties, 39 (10.77% of all RLP) were acquired and 7 (1.93% of all RLP) were floodproofed. In addition there are 12 properties (3.31%) in the process of flood mitigation, all in the City of Wauwatosa in Milwaukee County. There are 304 properties (83.98%) that remain floodprone and 54 NFIP communities with repetitive loss properties.

Acquisition was the most common choice of mitigation by most communities. The success of acquisitions is most evident in communities with widespread damage such as Kenosha County and the Village of Brown Deer. In these communities acquisitions are eliminating the majority of repetitive loss properties and reducing the risk of future loss. The implementation summary suggests using the updated database as a resource to prioritize mitigation projects for future HMGP, FMA and other program grants. It is also suggested that the repetitive loss data become part of the Interagency Disaster Recovery Group's criteria in funding mitigation projects.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| Executive Summary | ii |
| Table of Contents | iii |
| List of Tables | iv |
| Acronyms | v |
| I. Introduction | 1 |
| A. Purpose | 1 |
| B. Framework | 1 |
| C. Intent..... | 1 |
| II. Methodology..... | 2 |
| A. Organization..... | 2 |
| B. Building Status Options | 2 |
| C. Data Collection..... | 3 |
| III. Data Collection Findings..... | 4 |
| A. Number of Repetitive Loss Properties and Duplicate Properties | 4 |
| B. Repetitive Loss Property Building Status | 4 |
| C. Repetitive Loss Communities..... | 5 |
| D. Success of Post-Disaster Acquisitions | 6 |
| IV. Implementation Summary | 8 |
| A. Funding Sources | 8 |
| B. Mitigation Recommendations and Projects | 8 |
| C. Standardized Information | 9 |
| D. Updates..... | 9 |
| E. Target Repetitive Loss Properties..... | 9 |
| Attachment A List of Repetitive Loss Properties..... | 10 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1. Repetitive Loss Property Building Status | 4 |
| Table 2. Repetitive Loss Property Building Status Grouped by Flood Risk..... | 5 |
| Table 3. Communities with Repetitive Loss Properties..... | 6 |
| Table 4. Top Ten Communities with Highest Number of Repetitive Loss Properties | 6 |
| Table 5. Success of Acquisition in Reducing Repetitive Losses | 7 |
| Table 6. List of Communities with Repetitive Loss Properties | 10 |

ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|---|
| DNR | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| FIA | Federal Insurance Administration |
| FMA | Flood Mitigation Assistance Program |
| HMGP | Hazard Mitigation Grant Program |
| IDRG | Interagency Disaster Recovery Group |
| NFIP | National Flood Insurance Program |
| PIN | Parcel Identification Number |
| RLP | Repetitive Loss Property |
| WEM | Wisconsin Emergency Management |

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Repetitive Loss Report, referred to as the Repetitive Loss Report, is intended to serve as an attachment to the State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Repetitive Loss Report provides information on the status of repetitive loss properties by community in Wisconsin. The information provided can be used as a floodplain management tool and to supplement information provided by communities for flood mitigation grants administered by Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM).

B. Framework

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA), collects data on each property in the United States when a flood insurance claim is made. When more than one flood insurance claim of at least \$1,000 is made within a ten-year period, the property is classified as a repetitive loss property. Information on these repetitive loss properties is collected for each state in the FEMA repetitive loss database. However, the information collected by FIA is not standardized and has errors that require correction through the methodology described in Section II. .

C. Intent

Under federal disaster declaration FEMA-1332-DR-WI, a staff person was provided by FEMA to update the existing FEMA repetitive loss database with accurate information on each of the 362 properties listed and to assist the state in identifying those communities that warrant implementation of mitigation measures. The updated repetitive loss database is the source of information for this report. The Repetitive Loss Report can serve as a statewide plan for addressing repetitive loss properties. By accurately identifying which properties are the highest repetitive loss and should be considered for mitigation by the community, WEM will be better able to rank repetitive loss properties and make conclusive funding decisions for Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) mitigation projects to reduce future flood losses.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Organization

The methodology used for data collection consisted of contacting community officials, obtaining the best available and current information for properties in their jurisdiction and updating the database. Communities were contacted by telephone because most communities with repetitive loss properties in Wisconsin have only 1 or 2 repetitive loss properties. The information requested included the updated owner's name, updated or accurate property address, building status, mitigation status and parcel identification number (PIN). The PIN was requested because several of the repetitive loss properties are located in rural areas and have a rural route or other non-discrete address. By obtaining the PIN, the property can be easily identified since a PIN provides an exact location whereas an address can be vague.

The information requested was kept brief to not overburden the official with detailed and time consuming requests. This proved to be very effective in getting a quick response from many communities while providing the state with relevant updated information.

B. Building Status Options

There were six (6) building status options provided to the community official. The official was asked to select only one option per property so that the property's building status could be easily categorized. The options are listed below.

1. **Bought out or relocated** - Structure has been acquired or relocated out of the floodplain using a federal, state or local flood mitigation program. Property is now open space (If this option is selected, you do not need to complete the mitigation status).
2. **Approved mitigation project** - Structure is in a mitigation project that has been approved for funding but has not yet begun (If this option is selected, you do not need to complete the mitigation status).
3. **Elevated or floodproofed** - Structure is no longer subject to repetitive flood damages.
6. **Repaired but floodprone-same owner** - Structure has been repaired and re-occupied. Structure is still subject to flooding.
7. **Repaired but floodprone-new owner** - Structure has been repaired and re-occupied with a new owner. Structure is still subject to flooding.
- X. **No information** - If no updated information was available on the properties, they were identified as "X" on the database.

C. Data Collection

Data collection was accomplished through a telephone call made to the community official. Once all the data was collected from a community, the community information in the database was updated. When the data was collected from every community, changes to the database were finalized, and the findings were summarized in this Plan of Action.

III. DATA COLLECTION FINDINGS

A. Number of Repetitive Loss Properties and Duplicate Properties

The hard copy of the FEMA database used in this report was printed in June 2000 and identified 363 repetitive loss properties statewide in Wisconsin. However, examining the database revealed 2 duplications. In addition, the repetitive loss data collected by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and printed in January 2001 revealed one omission. Therefore, the most accurate and current total is 362 repetitive loss properties.

B. Repetitive Loss Property Building Status

The Wisconsin database identifies that 39 (10.77%) of the 362 statewide repetitive loss properties have been removed from the threat of flooding by acquisition. There are 7 repetitive loss properties (1.93%) that have been floodproofed and another 12 (3.31%) that are in the process of flood mitigation through acquisition. Thus, 58 repetitive loss properties (16.02%) are not or will no longer be vulnerable to flooding by the end of 2001. Generally, acquisition is preferred over floodproofing because acquisition completely removes structures from the floodplain, eliminating flood risk to the property and its owners. Floodproofing reduces the risk to repetitive loss structures while allowing the structures to stay in place. This can be a preferable alternative in some circumstances for historical or cultural reasons, but is possible only if the property is protected above the 100-year flood elevation.

Table 1. Repetitive Loss Property Building Status

| Building Status Description | Building Status Code | Number of Properties | Percent of Total |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bought Out (acquired) | 1 | 39 | 10.77% |
| Approved Mitigation Project | 2 | 12 | 3.31% |
| Elevated or Floodproofed | 3 | 7 | 1.93% |
| Floodprone-Same Owner | 6 | 250 | 69.06% |
| Floodprone-New Owner | 7 | 27 | 7.46% |
| No Information Available | X | 27 | 7.46% |
| Total | | 362 | 100.00% |

There are 304 (83.98%) repetitive loss properties where flood mitigation has not taken place or no information is available. These properties are presumed to remain floodprone. Of these 304 properties, 27 have changed ownership. These new property owners may not have experienced repetitive losses, but attention should be given to them since the owners may be unaware of the real flood threat and previous repetitive losses.

Table 2. Repetitive Loss Property Building Status Grouped by Flood Risk

| Flood Risk | Building Status Description (Building Code) | Number of Properties | Percent of Total |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|-----|---------|
| Mitigated | Bought Out (1) In Mitigation Project (2) Elevated/Floodproofed (3) | 58 | 16.02% |
| Remain Floodprone | Same Owner (6) New Owner (7) | 277 | 76.52% |
| Unknown | No Information Available (X) | 27 | 7.46% |
| Total | | 362 | 100.00% |

There are 27 (7.46%) properties that had no updated information available. This was usually due to incomplete or inadequate addresses and owner's names that were two or more decades old. These two factors made it virtually impossible for some community officials to track down the property.

C. Repetitive Loss Communities

The Wisconsin database identifies that there are 54 communities with repetitive loss properties. The data collection showed that several Wisconsin communities were incorrectly listed as a repetitive loss community for two main reasons. First, it appears that some of the incorrect listings were due to a property being a secondary or seasonal home, but the NFIP community listed was where the owner's primary residence was located and not the location of the flooded secondary home. Second, some incorrect listings were due to a property being in the unincorporated portion of a county, whereas the original database listed the property in the nearest incorporated community. These errors have been corrected in the Wisconsin database. It is important to note that communities in the database are listed and arranged as NFIP communities.

The corrected list of communities with repetitive loss properties yields the following data. Most communities with repetitive loss properties in Wisconsin have five or less repetitive loss properties, as displayed in Table 3. The ten communities with the most repetitive loss properties and the status of those properties are described in Table 4.

Table 3. Repetitive Loss Communities
Grouped by Number of Repetitive Loss Properties

| Number of Repetitive Loss Properties | Number of Communities | Percent of Communities |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1-5 | 46 | 85.19% |
| 6-10 | 5 | 9.26% |
| 11-20 | 1 | 1.85% |
| 21-50 | 1 | 1.85% |
| 51+ | 1 | 1.85% |
| Total | 54 | 100.00% |

Table 4. Top Ten Communities
with Highest Number of Repetitive Loss Properties (RLP)

| Rank | Community Name | Total RLP | Building Status of Total RLP in Community (by building status codes) | | | | | |
|------|--------------------|-----------|---|----|---|-----|----|----|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 | X |
| 1 | Milwaukee, City | 211 | 6 | | | 182 | 10 | 13 |
| 2 | Wauwatosa, City | 21 | 6 | 12 | | 3 | | |
| 3 | Darlington, City | 11 | 3 | | 6 | 2 | | |
| 4 | Brown Deer, City | 10 | 10 | | | 0 | | |
| 5 | Jefferson County | 10 | 1 | | | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| 6 | Kenosha County | 8 | 7 | | | 1 | | |
| 7 | Thiensville, City | 8 | | | | 7 | 1 | |
| 8 | Brookfield, City | 6 | 1 | | | 3 | 2 | |
| 9 | Trempealeau County | 5 | | | 1 | 4 | | |
| 10 | Glendale, City | 4 | | | | 4 | | |

D. Success of Post-Disaster Acquisitions

After the Midwest Flood of 1993 (FEMA-DR-994-WI), the HMGP had new resolve to address repetitive flood losses and unprecedented funding to accomplish the task. Although some acquisitions were planned prior to 1993, the size of the 1993 disaster guided future acquisition projects by refining Wisconsin's implementation policies and procedures for acquisition grants, specifically the HMGP. The success of the post-1993 acquisitions can be seen by an impressive reduction in repetitive losses.

Table 5. Success of Acquisition in Reducing Repetitive Losses

| Community | Repetitive Loss Properties (RLP) | Number & (%) of Local RLP Acquired | Number of RLP Remaining | Flood Risk of RLP Remaining | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | Mitigated or in Process | Flood Prone |
| Brown Deer, Village | 10 | 10 (100%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kenosha County | 8 | 7 (87.5%) | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Wauwatosa, City | 21 | 6 (28.6%) | 15 | 12 | 3 |
| Darlington, City | 11 | 3 (27.3%) | 8 | 6 | 2 |

The Village of Brown Deer and Kenosha County are two communities where acquisition projects have eliminated the majority of local repetitive loss properties. The Village of Brown Deer acquired 100 percent of its repetitive loss properties while Kenosha County acquired 87.5 percent. The City of Wauwatosa and the City of Darlington are two communities that have embraced flood mitigation through floodproofing as well as acquisition.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

A. Funding Sources

The primary source of mitigation funds is the Section 404 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The HMGP can provide local communities 87.5 percent (75 percent federal, 12.5 percent state) of the funds to implement immediate and long-term hazard mitigation measures following a federal disaster declaration. Communities must provide a non-Federal match of 12.5 percent either through a state agency or through a local funding source. The amount of HMGP funds made available is 15 percent of all direct disaster assistance from FEMA. HMGP projects are scored and selected by WEM and the IDRG on a variety of criteria that favor permanent and cost effective mitigation of flood damaged structures. Thus, repetitive loss structures are excellent candidates for mitigation with HMGP funds.

The second source of flood mitigation funds is the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program. FMA is state-administered through WEM and is a cost-share program (75 % federal, 25% local match) through which states and communities can receive grants for flood mitigation planning, technical assistance and mitigation projects. The overall goal of the FMA is to fund cost-effective measures that reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes and other NFIP-insured structures. Other goals are to: Reduce the number of repetitively or substantially damaged structures and the associated claims on the NFIP; Encourage long-term, comprehensive mitigation planning; Respond to the needs of communities participating in the NFIP; and Complement other federal and state mitigation programs with similar goals.

The significant differences between HMGP and FMA are that the FMA funds are allocated to the state annually, are not tied to a federal disaster declaration and are limited to only flood mitigation. FMA funding is also generally smaller in magnitude compared to the HMGP funding. As a result, FMA funding often supplements HMGP funding to accomplish a project. To receive mitigation project funds under FMA, local communities are required to develop a Flood Mitigation Plan that identifies those structures that are vulnerable to flood damage, establishes mitigation priorities and includes an action plan to reduce flood vulnerability. Mitigation of repetitive loss properties is a priority of FMA because structures with repetitive losses are likely to be highly vulnerable. Thus, a successful flood mitigation plan will identify any repetitive loss properties and will show how the community plans to mitigate those properties.

B. Mitigation Recommendations and Projects

The Plan of Action will provide the state with a resource to identify the properties with the most repetitive losses and to prioritize specific mitigation recommendations for those properties. The state will utilize the Repetitive Loss Report to identify the statistics from past and current mitigation projects in reducing flood losses and to provide guidance for future mitigation projects. Repetitive loss information will be considered as part of the funding criteria for future mitigation projects, especially FMA projects. It should be expected that when a community submits an application for HMGP or FMA funding, the

state would refer to the Repetitive Loss Report to determine if the repetitive loss properties are identified on the application. If they are not identified, the state should recommend that the repetitive loss properties become part of the project, provided the properties fit well within the original scope of the project and all funding requirements are met.

C. Standardized Information

Since some of the repetitive loss properties were unidentified due to poor location information, it is suggested that FEMA standardize their method of data collection for the repetitive loss properties. The consistent use of PINs on the flood insurance application would be one method of such standardization.

D. Updates

The Repetitive Loss Report will remain an addendum to the State of Wisconsin Hazard Mitigation Plan. Updates of the Repetitive Loss Report will be accomplished every year or two as new claim information is available from the NFIP and as remaining repetitive loss properties are mitigated through state programs.

E. Target Repetitive Loss Properties

In December 1999, FEMA issued guidance that stated emphasis should be given to addressing the target repetitive loss properties identified in FEMA's Repetitive Loss Strategy. Target properties were defined as structures with four or more losses and structures with two to three losses where cumulative payments exceeded the property value. According to these criteria, there are twelve such properties in Wisconsin located within nine communities. Eight are residential structures valued at \$1,042,700 and four are commercial structures valued at \$2.8 million. One of the target residential properties has been included in a mitigation project underway in the City of Wauwatosa, which will reduce the number to eleven properties. Any eligible mitigation proposal for target repetitive loss properties in Wisconsin would be a high priority for mitigation funding at WEM.

ATTACHMENT A

Table 6. List of Communities with Repetitive Loss Properties

| NFIP COMMUNITY | Repetitive Loss Properties | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| | Total | Acquired | Floodproofed | In Process | Remaining |
| Bayside, Village | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Berlin, City | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Blair, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Brookfield, City | 6 | 1 | | | 5 |
| Brown, County | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Brown Deer | 10 | 10 | | | 0 |
| Butler, Village | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Chaseburg, Village | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Chippewa Falls, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Clark County | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Columbia County | 3 | | | | 3 |
| Crawford County | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Dane County | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Darlington, City | 11 | 3 | 6 | | 2 |
| Delafield, City | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Door County | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Dunn County | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Durand, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Elm Grove, Village | 2 | 1 | | | 1 |
| Fond du Lac County | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Fountain, City | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Glendale, City | 4 | | | | 4 |
| Hillsboro, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Howard, Village | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Janesville, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Jefferson County | 10 | 1 | | | 9 |
| Kenosha County | 8 | 7 | | | 1 |
| Kenosha, City | 1 | 1 | | | 0 |
| LaCrosse County | 3 | | | | 3 |
| Loyal, City | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Marathon County | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Mequon, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Milwaukee, City of | 211 | 6 | | | 205 |
| Monona, City | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Neillsville, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| New Berlin, City | 1 | 1 | | | 0 |
| No. Fondulac, Village | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Oconto County | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Oconto, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Oregon, Village | 2 | 2 | | | 0 |
| Pepin County | 1 | | | | 1 |

List of Communities with Repetitive Loss Properties, continued

| NFIP Community | Repetitive Loss Properties | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| | Total | Acquired | Floodproofed | In Process | Remaining |
| Pierce County | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Prescott, City | 2 | | | | 2 |
| River Hills, Village | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Rusk County | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Sheboygan, City | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Silver Lake, Village | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Sturgeon Bay, City | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Thiensville, City | 8 | | | | 8 |
| Trempealeau County | 5 | | 1 | | 4 |
| Washington County | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Waukesha County | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Wausau, City | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Wauwatosa, City | 21 | 6 | | 12 | 3 |
| Total | 362 | 39 | 7 | 12 | 304 |
| PERCENT | 100% | 10.77% | 1.93% | 3.31% | 83.98% |
| Duplicates | 2 | | | | |